some bill to enable these billionaires' sensibilities not to be abrogated in any way.

We have been passing legislation at freight train speed to overturn all of the situations that would undergird the possibility of feeding our children their school lunches, of seeing to it that our students are able to maintain their financial aid, asking immigrants to come to this country and to achieve their citizenship as rapidly as possible.

Where I live in Hawaii we have immigrants coming in every day who are establishing themselves, working hard, paying their taxes, working forward and eager to the day that they can become citizens of the United States of America. How is it possible for a political party to defend those who have enjoyed the full benefits of citizenship in the greatest country on the face of the Earth, in the history of the world, and defend them when they seek to run away from the responsibilities that every other person in this country is pleased and happy and eager to undertake?

To have billionaires able to renounce their citizenship and have that excused and have them released from being able to pay for it off receipts that are needed in order for the self-employed to be able to deduct their health costs is a blot and a shame on the legislative business of this House of Representatives.

QUESTIONS THE PEOPLE IN MISSOURI WILL ASK SPEAKER GINGRICH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. VOLKMER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening at the conclusion of the debate on the term limits legislation proposed constitutional amendment, the Speaker, in addressing the House at the end of his remarks made a veiled threat to me and to other Democratic Members that when the constitutional amendment failed that it would become the No. 1 issue in the 1996 elections. And that as a result of that he was going to come back and be in the majority in 1997, and that the term limits legislation would then become No. 1 legislation, No. 1 bill.

I accept the challenge from the Speaker. I invite the Speaker to come to my district, and we will talk about the term limits legislation.

But I want to warn the Speaker that when he comes the people in my district, as I travel my district, are going to ask him some other questions. They are going to ask him some questions about a little book deal that he has with Rupert Murdoch and those people.

Mr. Speaker, they are also going to ask you about GOPAC and how GOPAC has been run for the last several years and the use of official office expenses, clerical hire, and the workings of GOPAC. And also you are going to be asked, Mr. Speaker, about use of official staff in the writing of your first book, ''Windows of Opportunity,'' in 1984.

You are going to be asked that, Mr. Speaker, because people now know as a result of an article in the Los Angeles Times on March 20, 1995, that your former staffers, the people who used to work for you, have told a reporter, Glenn F. Bunting and Alan C. Miller, staff writers for the Los Angeles Times, and these are their words, not mine, that in 1984 when the book was being written, the ''Windows of Opportunity,'' that the manuscript for that book was actually done in your official office by some of your official staff, on Government time, Government paying for it, and yet, you and your wife were paid thousands of dollars for writing of that book.

Mr. Speaker, they are going to also ask you about the statements by your former staff members that back in 1989 that there was a commingling of staff work on the course that you are teaching, or were teaching just recently, no longer teaching, but were teaching at the small college in Georgia and that work, preparation, et cetera, was being done, a lot of it was being done at your office, both here in Washington and in Georgia.

There are some of us that are in this House that are very concerned about the fact that the complaints and these allegations have been filed with the Ethics Committee and yet I believe in the 10 weeks I think the Ethics Committee has been in existence, the Ethics Committee has yet to act. And, in fact, the gentlewoman from Connecticut, who is the chairman of the Ethics Committee and also on this floor on January 4 when you were elected as Speaker and sworn in, the gentlewoman seconded your nomination, so there may be some conflict of interest there, so I understand the gentlewoman says there will be not anything done, no action taken at all until after the Easter recess.

For one party, the Gingrich Republican Party in this House to be able to do the contract on America legislation in 100 days, and yet not even have preliminary meetings and decisions made as to whether or not these matters should be investigated and as to whether or not a special counsel should be appointed is beyond me. It just shows me, Mr. Speaker, that there is stonewalling going on here, you are going to stonewall it, you are not going to proceed with the investigation, you are going to tell the American public, people in my district who I represent that you are above the rules of the House, and that the rules of the House do not apply to you.

FEDERAL RETIREMENT AND PENSION SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak for a little time this afternoon about some issues. I am going to be sharing time later with some of my freshman colleagues but I would like to indulge my colleagues for just a moment on some personal business to say a special congratulations.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ROCHESTER MAYO AND ROCHESTER LOURDES HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAMS

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate two outstanding high school girls' basketball teams from my home city of Rochester, MN. Last Saturday, the teams from Rochester Mayo and Rochester Lourdes won the Minnesota State basketball titles for class double-A and class A schools, respectively. Never before in Minnesota's history have two teams from the same city won State titles in the same year. Coach Bob Brooks of Rochester Mayo and Coach Myron Glass of Rochester Lourdes deserve the highest recognition for their service and leadership. Someone once said, ''Sports do not build character, they reveal it.'' This is certainly true of the girls of Rochester Mayo and Lourdes, who represented their schools and their city with distinction at the State tournament.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that you and my colleagues here today will share my heartfelt congratulations to these two great examples of American young women in pursuit of excellence.

I include for the RECORD the name of the team players, as follows:

ROCHESTER MAYO HIGH SCHOOL

Kelly Miller, Coco Miller, Laura Paukert, Kelly Hall, Vicky Ringenberg, Jessi Kruger, Nancy Spelsberg, Kjersten Kramer, Elissa Cookman, and Erin Fawcett.

Karen Mueller, Liz Perry, Jennifer Siewert, Beth Volden, Cara Weisbrod, Manager Brooke Halsey, Manager Brenna Paulson, Assistant Coach Les Cookman, and Coach Bob Brooks.

ROCHESTER LOURDES HIGH SCHOOL

Marie Wiater, Missy Sheehan, Rachel Horgen, Katie Shea, Courtney Benda, Laura Rogness, Bridget Garry, Johanne Letendre, Marnie Bowen, and Evelyn Molloy.

Danielle Bird, Katie Griffin, Denise Kruse, Kelly Schwanke, Lisa Graf, Manager Chantal Beaulieu, Manager Brita Johnson, Manager Sara Sherman, Manager Vanessa Woodcock, Assistant Coach Mike Fautsch, and Coach Myron Glass.

☐ 1530

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the subjects of my special order this evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania.) Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate that, as a freshman, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SHADEGG] and the gentleman from New Hampshire, also a freshman, are here to talk a little bit about some of the problems confronting our government.

Mr. Speaker, last year in the November campaigns many of us talked about the fiscal problems confronting the Federal Government. As a matter of fact I remember talking to my constituents and saying directly that there is time to turn this country around but there is not much time.

Since I have come to Washington the last 3 months, I have recognized that those words were even more true than I thought. As a matter of fact, as we began to look at the problems we face relative to the national deficit, relative to the various Federal trust funds, as a matter of fact, I have learned in the last several weeks when we had a debate earlier about the balanced budget amendment and people talked about the Social Security trust fund and how we had to preserve the integrity of the Social Security trust fund; but the unvarnished truth is if you take the Social Security trust fund and look inside it, what you will find essentially is IOU's from the Federal Government.

In fact, I am told now there is something like 160 different trust funds and essentially in each of those trust funds you will find exactly the same thing: IOU's from the Federal Government.

I would like to show some charts we have made. I will go to the one on the national debt itself. This chart indicates just how serious the problems that this government and ultimately our people confront.

Now, this first chart I want to show, and I think it is important for the American people to understand exactly where we are right now and where we are going.

Now, the numbers that you see on the chart are from the Clinton administration themselves. What they show is the actual accrued national debt today of approximately $4.6 trillion. That is in 1994.

Now, using their own numbers and their own budgets, they are projecting that the national debt will be $5.3 trillion in 1996, $5.6 trillion in 1997, and it continues to increase to $6.7 trillion by the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, we said it before, but I think it bears repeating, we are literally mortgaging our children's future, and I think we know they will not be able to make the payments.

Now, the next chart shows the year 2001, if we do not get control of our national debt, if we do not stop spending more than we take in. As a matter of fact, I think this year if you take the on-budget and the off-budget items—in fact, I carry it with me—taking both of those items, one of the things I have learned since I came to Washington is that we have gotten ever more creative in taking some things off budget.

But if you take both the off-budget and the on-budget items and put them together, this year we will spend, if you divide it by the number of days, hours, minutes, and the number of seconds, it works out, if my calculator is correct, to $9,195.84. That is how much this government will spend each second more than it takes in. That is how serious the problem is.

You can see by the second chart, if we do nothing by the year 2001—again, these are not our numbers, they have either come from OMB or Congressional Research Service—if we do nothing by the year 2001, the Medicare plan, the Medicare trust fund, if you will, will be insolvent. If we do not take action by the year 2012, we will only be able to pay for interest and entitlements. If we continue to delay action, by the year 2015 the Social Security disability income program will be insolvent.

Worst of all, if we take no action by the year 2029, the Social Security fund itself will be out of funds.

That gives you some idea of how serious those problems are.

Now, on the next chart we want to talk a little it about this item: The principal thing we want to talk about is the Federal pension plan. Let me say from the outset, Mr. speaker and Members, we are not here today to blame the Federal employees. As a matter of fact, as freshmen, we start with this whole issue with clean hands. But I think the American people and even the Federal employees need to understand how serious the problem is.

Currently, the Federal Treasury is spending $19.8 billion per year just to fund the pension promises of previous Congresses. It works out to $1.6 billion per month, or $553 million per day. Mr. Speaker, this is a serious problem.

I became interested because in my time that I spent in the Minnesota Legislature, I had an opportunity to serve on the Minnesota pension commission. I do not think there is anything worse than promising pension benefits and then refusing to fund them. I think it is the most hollow of all promises and, in fact, the cruelest of hoaxes.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from the State of New Hampshire [Mr. BASS].

Mr. BASS. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to demonstrate, in effect, what term limits is all about, by working example. we have here a group of freshmen, some of us have experience in working in retirement systems in our own home States, others of us have experience in other areas relating to pension systems either in our business or elsewhere.

But we come to Washington with a certain set of principles and understandings about finances and how financial retirement systems are supposed to work.

As a freshman member of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, I was proud to be appointed the vice chairman of the Civil Service Committee. One of the first issues we took up in the course of these duties was to look at the Federal retirement system. As my able colleague from Minnesota so perceptibly stated, we have a serious financial problem in this country. But what we have also is a hidden problem, and a very serious hidden problem, in our Federal retirees pension program.

As the gentleman from Minnesota pointed out a minute or two ago, this Federal retirees pension program is losing, or the Federal Government is shelling out on a monthly basis $1.6 billion. That is cash being shelled out to pay for Federal retirees.

As the gentleman from Minnesota mentioned, this is not to say or to cast aspersions upon any Federal retiree. What we say as freshmen is that something went wrong in this Congress when we were planning for the Federal retirement system, how to run it, and so forth. I do not know of a retirement system that would run $540 billion in deficit and be able to say it works correctly. This is Washington mentality, that is ''inside inside the beltway'' mentality; $19.8 billion a year is 10 percent of our entire operating deficit in this one program alone.

Ladies and gentleman, I think we have to look at this program, we have to look at it now. It is not easy working on Federal retirees pension, Social Security, and so forth, because you are affecting good people who put in years of service to their country and deserve a fair pension. But if we do nothing about this, we are going to be talking about significant increases in Federal liability over the coming months.

The Committee on Government Reform and Oversight has proposed, its Subcommittee on Civil Service, one part of the solution is raising the employee contributions to this program across the board by 2.5 percent over a period of 3 years. That would have raised approximately $11.5 billion over 5 years.

Bear in mind that we are talking about over $100 billion deficit, probably more than that over 5 years, but we are trying. There has been a lot of controversy associated with this piece of legislation. But we need to understand, whether you are a Federal employee, whether you are a citizen of this country, or whether you are a Member of Congress, that the time has come for us to make priorities and make rational financial decisions about systems in the U.S. Government that are out of whack. This is certainly one of the worst.

I might make a couple of references here. Of the $1.5 trillion annual budget that this Government operates, 10 percent of it, or $150 billion a year, goes into Federal salaries and benefits.

Now the Federal employees, if we can take a look at another chart here, their contribution to retirement benefits has been steady and is projected to do so for the next 30 years.

But look what happens to the Treasury Department contribution. It skyrockets. That spells disaster. I would hope that this country will rally behind each and every Member of Congress, especially those of us who are concerned about the long-term financial viability of this Government, about being able to, as has been said over and over again, give to our children a Government that is as good as the Government that we have been experiencing, the way of life we have experienced for the last generation, and you will help us make these difficult decisions to bring programs such as the Federal retirement system that is so dreadfully broken at this point, that will generate—we will have to pay in 30 years over $160 billion a year to fund it—to help us make these corrections now. Otherwise they are going to be 10 times worse in future generations.

These are not easy decisions. These are not easy decisions. There is nothing great or wonderful about having to deal with these difficult problems. Nobody is made popular by this.

But as freshmen, we Members of Congress feel that the time has come for the rubber to hit the road and for us to get to work in solving these problems.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I thank the gentleman for his comments. I wonder if we can talk for a minute about this graph because I was never particularly good in math. But you can see the geometric progression here. If we do not get control of this program soon, it is going to get just completely out of control. That is one of the things that concerns me.

We can again come to this whole issue with clean hands as freshmen Members of the Congress. But I say to you previous Congresses just made promises which are going to be next to impossible for us to keep in the future.

I want to correct the record because I think there is a misplaced decimal point in this particular chart. At the bottom it should be 53.3. There should be a decimal behind the first 3. It should be 53.3, not 533.

Now, while that does change the nature of the numbers, it does not change the nature of the problem.

I yield to our distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SHADEGG].

Mr. SHADEGG. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I compliment the gentleman from Minnesota and his colleagues from New Hampshire and Florida for bringing this matter to the attention of the American people. It is indeed a serious problem.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice to those who are calling for us to reexamine the Federal retirement programs.

I also would like to reiterate what my colleague from Minnesota said at the outset, that this is not a blame exercise. It clearly is not the fault of Federal employees. If it is the fault of anyone, it is the fault of prior Congresses that we are in this situation. But again, this is not a fault exercise but rather an exercise in determining what America needs to do now, indeed what the Congress needs to do now about this problem.

Regrettably, the story is not good. It is a difficult problem, growing much worse over time, as we will talk about. It is, sadly, a very familiar parallel with many other Federal benefit programs and entitlements programs.

Now, if you look at welfare, regrettably, look at Social Security, and a wide array of entitlement programs, prior Congresses have made promises about benefits and indeed have allowed benefits to grow and to grow over time, but they have failed to be responsible in a fiscal way. We have failed to require that the other side of the equation be funded or balanced. They have failed to provide the funding necessary.

Let us look, for example, at the Social Security system.

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As we know, as is common knowledge, the Social Security system in America will run out of funds early in the next century. Why? Because we have ever increasing benefit levels without proper funding without the revenue to pay for those. If Congress continues to ignore that problem, it will threaten our freedom, it will threaten the solvency of this Nation, and it will be irresponsible, and the Federal retirement program, which we are here talking about today, is very much like that. It is a similar pattern where the Congress has added benefits and given out payments and then not provided a funding mechanism.

If we take a look, we will find that we have promised not only increased benefits, but also COLA's, or cost of living adjustments, without footing the bill. Let us stop for just a minute, however, and take a look at history.

The history in this area was in some way a positive one. From about 1920 to 1969, Mr. Speaker, our Federal retirement system was properly funded. It was on a sound fiscal basis where the moneys that were being paid out were adequately being funded by a combination of employee and employer contributions, as they should have. The system in that time was structured to where the Government and the employees roughly shared an equal split 50–50. The employee, Federal employees, paid half the cost of the retirement program, and the Federal Government paid the other half.

Unfortunately that remains not the story today. What we have done is that we have allowed the system with amendments enacted roughly 26 years ago, in 1969, to grow dangerously out of balance. What has occurred is, where we once had a system with 50–50 funding, employee and employer, we now have a system which is closer to 30–70. The employee contributes about 30 percent of the cost; the employer, about 70. The taxpayer of America is shouldering this dramatically increased burden.

But worse then that, Mr. Speaker, we have added another problem on top of it, and that is the problem of COLA's. What we have done is we have created this concept of automatic, annual COLA's for all Federal employees, and beyond that we have established those COLA's at times at a rate even greater than the Consumer Price Index. That would be fine if we had provided a funding mechanism. Unfortunately we did not.

Let us take a look, by comparison, to the private system. This Congress in past years, taking a look at America and America's businesses, has passed very strict laws to govern private pension plans. Those laws say that, if you are going to establish in your business a private pension plan, you must follow a strict formula and fund that pension plan We recently passed on the floor of this Congress a bill that my constituents thought was a great idea, and it was a bill that said all of the laws that govern America and America's businesses also ought to apply to the U.S. Congress and its Members, a great concept. If we are going to require it of the American people, we ought to require it of ourselves.

Well, let me tell you, if we took America's pension law, which is known as the ERISA law, and applied that to the Federal pension plan that we are talking about here today, the taxpayers would have an immediate, unfunded obligation to come up with $1 trillion in cash today. If we applied the ERISA standards to the Federal pension plan, we would have to come up with $1 trillion cash. We cannot do that.

This chart which my colleague from New Hampshire mentioned and my colleague from Minnesota discussed in a little detail I think illustrates exactly what is going on, where at one point it was a 50–50 mix of employee and employer contributions, it now has grown to what you see. If you follow the path of this chart, you will see that the darker blue color at the bottom is the employee contribution. For about the next 35 years it stands at a fairly constant level, at about $4 to $5 billion a year, but the drama of the chart, what is so shocking in the chart, is the red, and that is the proportion paid out of the Federal Treasury, and let me just highlight those numbers for a minute. It grows from $42.9 billion in the year 2000, roughly $43 billion here, to $67.9 billion by 2010—I am sorry, by 2030, and to a whopping $160 billion if we allow the system to go without correction to the year 2030. What that means is that we have got a serious taxpayer fallout.

Who pays the burden? Right now the other chart shows it. Last year alone, to fund this system, the Federal Treasury had to come up with, and this Congress had to appropriate, an additional

$26 billion from the Treasury to supplement the employees contribution. We cannot do that.

Now let us do another comparison of private to public and get a similar idea of our pension plan at the Federal level versus what a typical one at the private sector would be. By any standard the pension plan we have established for Federal employees is a very generous one. Sadly it is one which these charts illustrate is going broke. In the private sector on average Federal pensions are smaller and not as generous.

Let me take one typical example. Typically in the private sector retirement age is 62, and if some employee chooses to take early retirement, they get a reduced pension. By comparison, in the Federal system the retirement age is not 62, but is rather 55, and although that is a significantly younger age than would be comparable in a good private sector plan, they get not a reduced pension at age 55, but a full unreduced pension at age 55.

But perhaps though a shocking comparison is the one between COLA's at the Federal level and COLA's within the private system. Federal pensioners, as I mentioned, have now gotten into a system where they receive, and have become dependent upon, annual, automatic COLA's, and they are keyed to the Consumer Price Index at the rate of 100 percent; that is, the CPI dictates that the COLA is 100 percent of the Consumer Price Index. By contrast, in our committee, the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, we recently had testimony from a witness talking about the Dupont Corp's COLA's and about their pension plan. In the private sector that testimony established that COLA's are given not automatically, but rather when called for. They are not given annually each year, and they are not given at a level of 100 percent of the Consumer Price Index. On average they are much closer to about 50 percent of the Consumer Price Index, and that is in generous plans that go well, and that does not even mention the plan that in many instances the private sector employers do not even provide a retirement plan.

The bottom line here is we have had 26 years of out of control Federal spending. The taxpayers cannot be responsible for irresponsible planning by the U.S. Congress. We cannot continue to defer our responsibilities to future generations. What we have got here ultimately is a moral problem, a moral problem of asking our children and our grandchildren to pick up the tab for our refusal to pay for what we have promised, and that is the bottom line.

No one is asking the Federal employees to share the burden of solving this entire problem. That would not be fair or responsible, but what we do need to do is move toward a more reasonable balance between the funding of this system and the benefits which are provided, and every day that Congress fails to act in that way, every day that we continue to allow this kind of irresponsibility to go on in the Federal retirement system, we are doing a disservice, a disservice not just to the taxpayers, but a disservice to the Federal employees who are going to rely and are relying on that. We cannot make changes which would dramatically affect those who are close to the age of retirement. We cannot ask them to pay for Congress' irresponsibility. But we can begin the process of bringing some sense of financial sanity or reason back to what is clearly a radically out of balance system, one which is improperly funded and would be criminal were it judged by the standards we apply to private employers.

I thank the gentleman.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SHADEGG], and I think the gentleman from New Hampshire had a question that he wanted to pose. I ask the gentleman from Arizona if he would stay there for a minute and have a little discussion.

Mr. BASS. Those of us who have been involved in the private sector, as we have, I was intrigued by a comment that the gentleman made. Certainly Federal employees are good employees, and they do important jobs and do the work of the Government. But I heard you say, and I think you should repeat it for everyone's benefit, that most small businesses do not have any pensions at all. You have your IRA, you have whatever you can save, and you do not know whether you are going to have a job next Monday, let alone next year.

Mr. SHADEGG. I mean indeed that is, in fact, true, and it is not something that I think is a great attribute, but in point of fact only large employers in America provide pension plans. Many of them do not even do that. While we might all wish that the small employers of America, which make up the backbone of America, could establish this kind of plan, they simply cannot, and in those jobs, and in people working for small businesses across America, all too often are, or at least in almost all cases, those employees are asked to be responsible and to look after their own retirement. They get Social Security, but they are expected to look beyond that and to fund it themselves.

We have done, and I think we should do, the responsible thing by Federal employees, to establish a system which assists them in this way, a system which is comparable, or should at least be comparable, to a private sector system, but we cannot promise them radically better than the private sector system especially if we do not fund it, and indeed we cannot fairly ask the taxpayers of America to fund a system which gives benefits way in excess of what even the best private sector employers provide.

Mr. BASS. Well, I am sure the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SHADEGG] is aware of the fact that in the course of our committee hearings we heard significant testimony from representatives from the Federal employees who represented that it was difficult to exist in many instances as a Federal employee, and the pension system is a very necessary and important part of a Federal employee's compensation package, which I think is certainly commendable. However, we are also made aware of the fact that the quit rate for Federal employees is zero, technically zero, after 10 years, zero, and it just so happens that the retirement system vesting is 5 years. And we know, if you live an any small town in this country that when the job opening occurs in a Federal position, people in towns and cities across this country fall all over themselves to get these positions, and it seems hard for me to believe, and perhaps you would agree with me, that this is particularly difficult working conditions or tough employee—you know, that the pay and benefits is—would create a situation in which there would be a large supply, but very little demand. It seems to be the opposite of that, and certainly, as I recall, the average pension for Federal employees is over $1,500 a year, and a Social Security recipient receives—excuse me, over $1,500 a month—and the average Social Security recipient receives less than $600 a month. There is certainly a disparity, so I am sure the gentleman from Arizona would agree that it is important to compare apples to apples here in the way the real world—most of America exists in this world, which is in the private sector, working for small businesses where there are no pension plans at all.

Mr. SHADEGG. There simply is no question but that we owe it to the Federal employees to create a fair system, and I do not think they are asking us for any more than that, but we owe it to them, and we owe it to the taxpayers, to make sure that that fair system is comparable to what would exist in the private sector and is funded. If we could pass a law like ERISA and say to a private employer it is a crime for you to underfund your program, and you cannot even establish your program without our approval and your proof that it is funded, then we owe it to the public sector employers, employees, and to the taxpayers who foot that bill to do the same and to live up to that standard.

Reform is necessary; that is evident. The subsidy of $1.6 billion a month, over $18 billion a year, 10 percent of the annual deficit, is something simply we cannot ignore, we cannot shut our eyes to it, and we have to get down in the trenches and discover a fair—and negotiate, come to a reasonable solution to this problem.

I thank the gentlemen and compliment them.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I want to point out just a couple of things before I yield to the chairman of the Civil Service Subcommittee about this chart. I assume that those numbers are in constant dollars, and if we see an inflation rate into the future, we could see those numbers significantly worse in terms of total numbers than they are, and I think that is one of the real scary facts. If this is in constant dollars, how bad can things get if the inflation rate begins to pick up again into the future? And again, just to stress, this is not about punishing Federal employees. The mistakes have been made, but I think the Representative from Arizona made such a good point about ERISA.

You know we have very strict regulations on privately run pension plans, and my sense is that whether there would be indictments I do not know, but there certainly should be an investigation if Congress had been covered by the ERISA laws over the last number of years in making these promises without funding them.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the chairman of the Civil Service Subcommittee, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICA].

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] for yielding, and I just want to make one comment to the Speaker and also to my colleagues in the House.

You know the regular order of business of the House of Representatives has concluded, and we are involved in special orders this afternoon. Some of the Members are already on their way to their families or back to their districts for the weekend.

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We concluded the normal business, but, you know, sometimes you get dismayed about the process here in Congress. But I have to say that I want to commend the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT], the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SHADEGG], and the gentleman from New Hampshire [Mr. BASS], who serves as vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service which I chair. These are three new Members of Congress, and my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, and the American people can take heart that we have representatives like this that will stay to discuss this issue.

Now, this is not the juiciest issue to come before the Congress, and it does not have people clamoring in the rafters, but this shows you the caliber, the dedication that we have now serving and level of responsibility we have serving in the House of Representatives. I, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, did not initiate this. These new Members initiated this because they wanted to bring to the attention of the House and the American people one of the things that we uncovered.

You know, we have a new majority here, and we found many things in the past month, 2 months that have been swept under the table. This clearly is something that needs the attention of this Congress and that needs action on a bipartisan basis to resolve.

I have been told that the good news is I am in the majority and I was named chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service. The bad news is I am responsible for the retirement system for Federal employees. And the further bad news is that we have a $540 billion Federal unfunded liability to that fund.

Now, we really have two problems in addition to what I just described, and again I have described a half a trillion dollar unfunded liability. We have an annual outflow, and I think these charts show it. Right now, it is $19.8, between $19.7 and $19.8 billion a year from the General Treasury to support not the unfunded liability but to make this solvent on a month-to-month and year-to-year basis.

It would be bad enough if this $19.8 billion was just for this year, but the projections you have seen and they have shown you from these charts are absolutely startling. In fact, the system, the old system, and I will describe that in a second, runs out of money in the year 2008 by the projections of this administration.

Now let me back up, if I may, and tell you a little bit about the retirement system from a historical perspective. First of all, we had a Civil Service Retirement System, and that is known as CSRS, and that existed until about 1985. Most of the employees who are in retirement, about 1½ million Federal retirees are in the old CSRS system.

I will say that the Congress recognized in 1984, 1985 that there was a growing problem and an unfunded liability and the program was out of control, just as they have recognized from time to time we have the same problem with Social Security. So what they did is they created a new program, and most of the Federal employees from 1987 forward, about the last 8 years, all belong to part of that new program. It is called FERS or Federal Employee Retirement System. So we have two systems.

However, they combined all of the retirement funds into one fund, one retirement trust fund. What they did not do in 1985 and what we have a difficult time sobering up to do and this Congress will not face up to the responsibility right now of is making certain that we meet the financial responsibility on a year-to-basis and then also do something about this potential unfunded liability.

I proposed, and, you know, we have heard many things commented on by public employee groups and others that Chairman MICA has proposed this bad thing or this cut or that cut and he is going to cut COLAs. Let me tell you what I came up with as a solution and recommended to our Subcommittee on Civil Service.

I said, well, we have this $19.8 billion annual outflow from the Treasury, about $20 billion. Why do we not have the employees increase their contribution? And we do not do it all at once. We propose to do it, I propose to do it, I propose to do it 1 percent, a half a percent, then another percent so we get up to, from 7 percent, the current contribution, to 9½ percent in a period of 3 years. I would like to have projected it out even further, but be thought that was a reasonable approach.

We did not touch COLAs. We did not touch potential 2 percent pay increases. We did not touch locality pay. We did not change the terms of retirement.

Now, what we did was we adjusted this $19.8 billion annual outflow from the Treasury. Now, that did not do anything really do adjust the unfunded liability. The only thing that we did that affects benefits or any calculations in any way is we changed calculating what is now the high 3 years of service, the amount that an individual earns, to the high 5 years. That does make a small dent in the unfunded liability.

so we addressed the annual outflow again of the $20 billion. We did it fairly. We increased it gradually. We put part of the burden, about half of it, on the Federal employer. We put about half of it on the Federal employee. That is all we did.

We did not propose, again, any cuts in COLAs or any other benefits, and I am really irritated by some of the employee groups that have sent out a message to the contrary. We tried to act as a new majority in this Congress in a responsible fashion to get this House in order.

Now, let me say that I recently saw the opposition circulate, the opposition to my proposal circulate a letter from CRS [Congressional Research Service], that tried to justify that there was no need to take any action, that all this will work out.

I am taking here, and this is not as fancy as the new Members of Congress have proposed, a page from the Office of Personnel Management Annual Report. This is 1993, produced by the administration. Now, they say here $540 billion unfunded liability.

Now, we could call this a rose, and by any other name it is still a rose. This is $540 billion unfunded liability, no matter how you cut it.

Now, you want to hear the really bad news? They say that there is plenty of money coming in and that there is money in reserve. Guess what I found out when I checked into where the reserves are? Ninety-seven percent of the reserves of the employee retirement fund are really in nonnegotiable instruments, really instruments of indebtedness of the U.S. Treasury.

So if the public employees look in there or retirees look in there, there is no real solid basis for this. And this Congressional Research Service report said that there is no problem. That was produced by the opposition to our plan, says, well, we do not have to worry because it is funded by the taxpayers.

Well, that is the problem, and this situation is a microcosm of the bigger situation. We do not have to worry about it. We do not have to worry about the debt of this Nation. We do not have to worry about waking up tomorrow and having our dollar, like the peso was worth 60 cents on a dollar, because it is funded by the taxpayers. But this bait and switch, this failure to face up to reality, will catch up with us.

Now, I could ignore this. I do not like being politically unpopular with Federal employees or retirees. I do not like the marching on my office or saying that Mr. MICA is a heartless individual.

But the responsible thing for us to do and the responsible thing that these new Members have done at this hour, this late hour, is come forward on their own and said, we have a problem, we need to face up to this problem, we need to resolve this problem. So this is what we have done. This the Administration's proposal.

Even the Administration in its budget submission, and I just got through testifying to the Committee on the Budget on this, has stated that we need to do something to better reflect this. Now, what they do is play a game, and they propose that we shift the $19.7 billion back to each agency's budget. Well, we do that, but the $19.7 billion still comes out of the taxpayer pockets.

Now, I said, let us be fair. Let us make sure that we do not make the same mistake that was made by our predecessors. Let us put this money into a retirement fund and have some actual assets in the retirement fund and not play games with it. So we set our house in order from this point forward.

So that was my proposal. That is what we have said. We have not, again, proposed any damaging cuts. We felt that there might be an opportunity in this Congress, even with the constraints that we are under, to keep our commitments on COLAs.

And no one has advocated stronger than I have in this House that if we do anything with COLAs we do it across the board and we limit increases. We do not cut COLAs. We do not cut our commitment to people who have served this Nation well or who have worked as civil servants and deserve to see us keep our commitment. We do not do anything that will harm these people or the prior commitments of prior Congresses or commitments that we should keep.

So that is what we have done. I proposes the plan that you heard, again, that would help solve a little bit of the unfunded liability and the outflow on a reasonable basis, it is now in the hands of the Committee on the Budget. They are adopting, I hope, most of our proposal, but it is not an easy thing.

Politically, it is easy to ignore. No one wants to be disliked because they are going to increase employee contributions. But I will tell you what it is. It is the right thing. It is the responsible thing. It is the type of action that has been ignored too long by this Congress, whether it is in its entire budget or in this little microcosm, the retirement system.

So I urge my colleagues to act responsibly, to work in a bipartisan fashion. And the thing about this is, let me tell you that this is not the end of the story. There is more to this story, because we are going to still have to come back and address this unfunded liability.

It is my determination as Chairman of this Subcommittee on Civil Service to bring the fiscal house of this retirement fund in order. We will bring in actuarials. We will bring in other individuals. We will calculate in now the downsizing of the Federal Government which we ask OPM that they calculate it in that the President is recommending 272,000 cuts.

In fact, we took some of the funds out of the crime bill to fund the crime bill out of the budget, and we must cut those positions. We have not calculated in what the other body is saying, cutting half a million positions. We have not calculated in what the White House is saying as far as further reductions in the scope or other Members of Congress or even the freshmen Republican class has come up to abolish four or five agencies. They have not calculated in the equation of these additional cuts.

So this is where we are, and this is where we are going, and this is what we failed to do.

But, again, I want to commend each and every one of these new Members for coming forward, for organizing this special order, for setting in the record of the Congress what the situation is, what our commitment is, what we have proposed and what needs to be done.

So, with that, I commend the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. GUTKNECHT, and the vice chair of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, Mr. BASS, for their action, for their commitment to getting the fiscal house of this Congress and this retirement fund in order.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I congratulate the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICA], because, as the gentleman said, this is not a particularly popular issue. We are really talking about some facts and figures that a lot of people do not want to hear and numbers and a program that has been swept under the rug for so long.

In fact, when I went into the first meeting and was briefed on what was happening with the Federal pension plan, having served on the State pension commission back in Minnesota, I was alarmed. And then when I went into the committee room I was angry.

I will tell you why. Because, first of all, I was alarmed to see how big the problem was and how the Congress in the past has just swept all of this under the rug. And I was angered because it was clear to me when we went into that committee room that this issue was going to be a partisan issue. I think that is unfair to the taxpayers, and I think it is unfair to the Federal employees.

The way we dealt with pension policy back in Minnesota was with a bipartisan from the house and senate, a bipartisan pension commission. I hope that one day perhaps we can look at that for here at the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, some kind of a bipartisan group that can meet together and work out long-term strategies and put these programs on a long-term fiscal solvency basis. Because I think what we have been doing or what has been done in the past is wrong.

Mr. MICA. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Absolutely.

Mr. MICA. Well, you know, again, I think that we need to approach this on a bipartisan basis, that we need a resolution to this, that I do not like the other side or anyone going and telling employees that we are going to do things that we are not going to do to them.

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Instead, they should be transmitting information that we have a problem and we need to deal with it. I am willing, as chairman of this subcommittee, and with this responsibility, an I know the gentleman from New Hampshire, [Mr. BASS] extends the same invitation to meet with any groups at any time if they have a better solution, if they have a better way of working this out.

However, we cannot be in a state of denial. We cannot say this does not exist. We cannot ignore this and say it will go away. We have to act responsibly.

I might add also that I saw something from one of the Postal Supervisors group that spoke in opposition to what we are doing. We do not even affect the postal system. They are taken out, and they do have, since they have changed their status, they have created a responsible system, a responsible contribution. They are not affected. Their 800,000, 900,000 postal employees are not affected. We are not proposing any change there. This is only current Federal employees.

Mr. Speaker, again, this has not been changed since 1972. It is not like they have been hit every year on this. I know they have taken some other reductions, and it may not be fair, but the alternatives, I submit, are not very tasteful.

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, as we well know, on the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service we listened to a number of days of testimony, mostly from Federal retirement groups. It is amazing to me that we are not in a position and we are not willing at this point to all get together, retirees, Federal employees, and Members of Congress, to address these issues together.

We are not going to call a system that taxes the Federal Government on a monthly basis to the tune of $1.6 billion, we are not going to say that that system is fixed. We have to work together, Federal employees, everybody who receives a retirement check, and those of us who are concerned about this program, because one day, as we say from those charts, when the cost of this programs reaches $160 billion a year, Uncle Sam just is not going to be there to pay it.

Who is going to pay the price for that in the end? It is going to be all of us. It is going to be the Federal employees, Federal employees who are entering the work force now. They are going to be the ones that will not get a retirement check, because we will not have the money to pay for it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the chairman of the Committee on Civil Service for taking on this issue. It is a difficult issue. I's sure we all have both retirees and Federal employees in our districts who do not like to hear this kind of thing. However, believe me, we are working for the future of each and every person who is paying into the system now and who will benefit from it in the future.

Mr. ZELIFF. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I yield to the gentleman from New Hampshire.

Mr. ZELIFF. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from New Hampshire, as well as my colleague from Rochester, MN. What a great thing it is to be working with the gentleman from New Hampshire, and with the good work you are doing on the Committee on the Budget.

As a businessman, a former businessman that has been involved for the last 35 years of my life, Mr. Speaker, not only with the DuPont Co., running the Xerox antifreeze business, but in our own small business, a country inn up in the White Mountains, I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, when we look at government and we look at this monster, we look at things like the fact that we are $4.7 trillion in debt, we are going to add another $1 trillion to our debt over the next 5 years. We look at the fact that the interest on the debt is roughly 16 percent of the total available resources. Sixteen percent, as a business guy, I could not carry that with my business.

If we look at the fact that in the year 2003 Medicare is going to go broke, in the year 2029 Social Security is going to go broke, in the year 2012 we are only going to have enough money to pay for the interest on the debt and the cost of entitlements, the red lights are going off all over the place. From a business point of view, we have to say ''Whoa, what are we going to do about it?''

What we are going to do about it, we are going to stop the hemorrhaging, stop the bleeding. One of the ways to stop the bleeding is, hey, why should we have, if we are going to be a citizen form of government, we are going to be down here—and I voted for limited terms, for the 12-year version, as you all have, as 83 percent of the Republicans voted for, versus 83 percent of the other side voted against—we have to not take as much money out in our pensions. Maybe we should not have any pensions at all.

Last year I joined the gentleman from North Carolina, HOWARD COBLE, four of us, that said ''Let's forgive our pension. Let us not take a pension.'' That is a good way to start. Let us lead by example. You know, how can we possibly justify haveing a special pension program for ourselves? We have to get that back in line to start with, to lead by example, and then we have to go with the Federal retirement system that is costing $1.5 billion a month, $19 billion a year. That is real hemorrhaging.

What we can start out with, Mr. Speaker, is we can at least start out with, instead of the best 3 years, go to the best 5 years. We can start adding a little bit more, whether we get to the whole $19 billion or not. We can at least make an effort to get started.

Mr. Speaker, this is one great place. Last year I started a little concept called A to Z. The gentleman will remember that. That is what we asked for. We asked for 10 days to do nothing but cut spending, to do it in front of the whole world to watch and judge us, as we did our work here.

Let us take a look at some 1,200 programs. Let us get rid of those programs that do not work. Let us keep the programs that do work. This is one program we have to get back on track.

I applaud all of you. I'm sorry I was detained at another meeting. I applaud you, Mr. Chairman, for the work, the hard work, that you have done on this thing. We look forward to the debate as it now moves forward. Hopefully we are going to be able to do some very solid pension reform.

Again, it has to start with us first. We have to lead by example. We have to cut ours and make ours more in line with what everybody else out there is dealing with.

Mr. BASS. If the gentleman will continue to yield, Mr. Speaker, of course you know, coming from the frugal State of New Hampshire, that we have a constitutional amendment that prohibits our State employees retirement system from operating with any unfunded liability whatsoever. It is not a law, it is a constitutional amendment.

We also have an independent board that governs the employer-employee contribution, the investment policies and so forth, of our State retiree system, and the result has been that we have never had a problem that even approaches—we never had any problem with an unfunded liability.

$1.6 billion a month, as the gentleman from New Hampshire well knows, is just about what the State of New Hampshire receives from the Federal Government in an entire year for every service that the State gets: Medicaid, food stamps, highway and bridge repair, everything. Yet this program, this Federal retirement program, is costing the taxpayers of this country more in a month than our home State of New Hampshire gets in a whole year from the Federal Government.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I think our time is about up, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say a few words.

First of all, I want to thank the gentleman from New Hampshire, Mr. ZELIFF and Mr. BASS, and the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. SHADEGG, for joining me today.

I would just say that I could have been on a plane on my way home right now, but I think this issue is so important, and I think it is a microcosm of all of the problems we have with Federal spending today. The old way that Washington did business was to just sweep all of this under the rug and pretend that it did not exist.

Last November, I think the American people sent a whole new group of people here to Washington who would change the way Washington does business. I am proud to be a part of that change. And, it would be much easier to ignore this problem, to sweep it under the rug, but I think the American people and the Federal employees deserve better, because as I said earlier, we have mortgaged the future, and our children are going to have a very difficult time making the payments with that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to yield for the last word to the chairman, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICA].

Mr. MICA. Again, I do want to thank again particularly the new Members, and also my colleague, the gentleman from New Hampshire [Mr. ZELIFF], for their leadership on this issue; for coming forward, for taking time to address this.

This is not kind of the fun thing, it is not the fancy thing that will make the headlines, it is not the exciting issue, but it is the responsible issue. We came here, I think I came here—I have only been here 27 months, from the business community, to try to apply some business principles to what I saw here in Congress.

I think you have also set a standard for doing that in particularly the freshman class. Again, acting in a responsible manner to try to bring our fiscal house in order, we are not here to impose any penalty, any tax on our Federal employees, but we want to work with them in a cooperative effort to bring their house, their house into order, and the fiscal house of this Nation into order, because we can't continue to spend the way we are spending.

We can't continue to sweep these problems aside and ignore these problems. We've got to address these problems, face up to these problems, and look for sound solutions to resolve these problems.

I will tell you, I have sat on corporate boards, and in a corporate board, if these facts were brought before us it would not take us more than 15 minutes to make a decision on how to face up to this. Mr. Speaker, the alternative in the private sector would be, again, you would go to jail, because you would violate the ERISA laws and standards set up by this Congress.

The only difference is this is a public entity, so we are not here to impose any harm, we are not here to impose any tax, we are here to say that, you know, the piper must be paid; that we can't continue robbing Peter to pay Paul in this fashion, that we must act in a sensible, responsible fashion.

With that, Mr. Speaker, again, I thank you for bringing this to the attention of this Congress, and for the RECORD, that we, and I as the chairman, and you as members of this Government Reform and Oversight Committee, we saw the problem, we identified the problem, we proposed a solution, and we are committed to work with all the Members of this Congress to try to bring, again, this important responsibility that we have, that we are cast with, into some order, into some fashion, and so that people look back and they say, "You know, what did they do in 1995? Did they ignore this, or did they find a solution?"

We propose that solution, we offer it to the Congress. We hope they won't play politics, that they will be out there with public employees and others stirring up the pot, and saying, "No, no, no, this will go away," because I tell you, Mr. Speaker, this will not go away. It must be addressed. We must have responsible leaders and responsible actions, just as you have outlined here, and just as you present in the fashion that you have in this special order tonight.

I personally thank you. I thank you on behalf of our subcommittee and committee, and I thank you on behalf of a future generation of Federal retirees and people that are in the system now and counting on us to act in a responsible fashion.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I have been in committee and did not know there was a special order on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman says he would like to work together. It would have been nice if we had had somebody here who perhaps has a little different perspective than the gentleman from Florida. As he knows, a number of studies have been done within the past few weeks which indicate that the problem of which the gentleman has spoken, apparently for about an hour, does not exist.

That is not to say that we don't contribute $19.8 billion a year. We do. We contribute that money, as all of you know, for the purposes of funding a retirement system for our employees. I understand the gentleman has been very concerned about saying we ought to have a fund on hand.

Social Security, of course, is off the table. There is no fund on hand, as the gentleman well knows, for Social Security, which is our largest unfunded liability, if you will, in certain senses. But I am disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that I was unable, given the timeframe, to participate in this debate. This is a good debate. This is a debate we ought to have. My friend, I understand, mentioned that earlier.

I am fully prepared to participate in that debate. What I am, however, concerned about is that a system that affects 2 million people is being rushed to judgment without having the ability to get the votes in your committee.

The markup was adjourned. It now is before the Committee on Rules and included in your tax bill to pay for your tax cut.

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I regret that the time has expired, but I look forward to discussing with my colleagues this issue. It is an important issue.

I believe the facts will show that there is not the depth of the problem that I think my colleagues perceive and that there are ways and means to solving the problem, without getting large sums by putting a tax on existing Federal employees, which averages about 10 percent in the coming 2 to 3 years.

I thank my colleague for yielding.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO RESTRICT FLIGHTS OVER CERTAIN AREAS OF HAWAII'S NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. FOX] of Pennsylvania]. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii [Mrs. MINK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, the air tour helicopter industry in the State of Hawaii has recently experienced tremendous growth that is forecasted to continue. Helicopter tours provide a unique opportunity to view the natural beauty of parts of my State, especially the distinctive characteristics of Hawaii's national parks. The elderly, disabled, and others who would otherwise be unable to see the parks on foot are enabled by helicopters.

However, despite these advantages, noise disturbances in the parks have increased with the growth of the industry that have agitated hikers, campers, adjacent residents, and native animal species whose precious habitat is being conserved by the parks. A balance must be struck between the helicopter industry and those rightfully wishing to enjoy the parks, which my legislation seeks to achieve.

I am reintroducing legislation that would apply specifically to overflights above Haleakala National Park, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Kaloko Honokohau National Historic Park, Pu'u Kohola Heiau National Historic Site, and Kalaupapa National Historical Park.

My bill applies to helicopter and fixed-wing flights over the designated park system units in Hawaii through the establishment of an above-ground standoff altitude of 1500-feet and flight-free zones over specific parks. My bill would also address additional safety concerns by requiring short-term sightseeing flights which begin and end at the same airport and are conducted within a 25-mile radius to comply with stricter Federal Aviation Administration [FAA] flight standards.

Currently, the FAA has in place emergency regulations for commercial air tour operators in Hawaii requiring a 1500-foot minimum standoff distance or above-ground-level, implemented in October, 1994. FAA promulgated these regulations in response to a significant increase in the number of air tour crashes in Hawaii, including two in July 1994—one resulting in three fatalities. The regulations also included additional measures to improve safety within the industry: thorough self-review, use of flotation devices such as pontoons and lifejackets, pre-flight safety briefings, and mechanical recommendations for the operation of air tour vehicles.

Despite these regulations, many of my constituents continue to report tour helicopters flying and hovering at low altitudes near their homes and over the parks. The FAA has reported 20 enforcement actions raised against air tour operators for violations of the regulations. For these reasons, the need for my legislation is even more necessary. Similar legislation has already been put into place and successfully implemented for air tour operators at Grand Canyon National Park.

It is indisputed that Hawaii's commercial air tour industry is an integral part of the State's economy. However, the industry must be required to improve its standards of safety and noise control for the good of the State's residents, visitors and natural resources.

I urge my colleagues to support and take swift action on my legislation.

BOB JOHNSON: A GIANT IS GONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BRYANT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRYANT of Texas. Mr. Speaker, one of the giants of Texas government is gone. As I speak, Bob Johnson, my friend and a dedicated servant of the people of Texas, is being laid to rest in the Texas State Cemetery in Austin.

Although Bob Johnson served four terms in the Texas House of Representatives, his greatest service was as director of the Texas Legislative Council and parliamentarian of the Texas House from 1963 to 1980 and parliamentarian of the Texas Senate from 1991 until his death on March 27, 1995, at the age of 66.

The offices he held, however, do not tell the full story of Bob Johnson or of his importance to my State and to those who have served it.

Although he sat at the left hand of the Speaker—a critical adviser to the presiding officer both on and off the floor—during my tenure in the Texas House of Representatives at a time when some of my colleagues and I led a vigorous opposition to the leadership, he was always honest, straightforward, and as helpful to the forces for reform as to those in control.